

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Reserve
A275.2
Ex8Ho

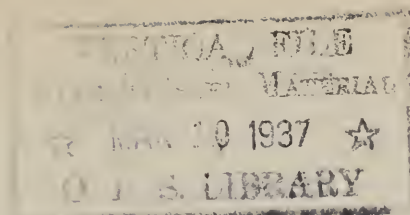
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
LIBRARY



Reserve
BOOK NUMBER
874762

A275.2
Ex8Ho

ES
Library



730

Extension Service,
U. S. Dept. Agr.
Div. coop. ext.

³
THE HOME DEMONSTRATION AGENTS' POINT OF VIEW

Problems in Home Demonstration Work
and Its Supervision as Suggested by
Representative County Home Demonstra-
tion Agents in the Eastern States



For use in the Discussion Conference on Supervision
Victoria Hotel, New York City
February 25-27, 1937

144-37

The Home Demonstration Agent's Point of View

In preparation for this conference on "Supervision" extension directors of the eastern States were asked to send out a letter to representative county workers to get their point of view on these two questions:

1. What do you consider your greatest problem in carrying out your work?
2. In what ways can your State leaders help you more in improving your work?

Twenty-seven home demonstration agents in nine States answered these letters, and their replies have been summarized and grouped as follows:

Answers to: What do you consider your greatest problem in carrying out your work?

A.-Program planning.

1. To present an educational program in home economics to women having a wide range in educational background as well as great differences in social and economic status.
2. To plan program to meet needs of women which they recognize in answer to their needs.
3. To plan a program to interest the women, yet be in keeping with the long-time objectives in extension work.
4. To make program varied enough to interest all members without making it a patched-up affair.
5. To reach people who need help rather than those who seem fairly well informed but enjoy going to meetings for social pleasure.
6. To arouse interest of women to their need for study of homemaking.
7. To get individual homemakers to assume responsibility and take part in planning the home demonstration program.
8. An agent has to "spread herself too thin" with too many projects at one time. Why not concentrate on major projects in a county for a certain period.
9. Local people need to look at home demonstration work from a broader point of view and to see beyond their individual and group needs to problems of the community as a whole.

B.-Methods.

1. How to overcome traditional ideas of homemakers that "old way" is all right.

B.-Methods (cont'd).

2. How to present old material in a new way, particularly in nutrition.
3. How to overcome inertia of women. Extension workers have constantly and continually to sell the program.
4. To reach more young homemakers.
5. The extension meeting has much competition these days - not the event it used to be.
6. There is difficulty in getting women to actually do work themselves, such as making clothes and hats. Exception is in foreign-born and lower-income groups.
7. Helping homemakers to actually practice the things they know how to do. Overcoming that inertia between knowing and doing.
8. Number of letters, notices, etc., sent from county office increases each year. Is it wise to continue sending out so much material?
9. Getting better attendance at meetings, increasing volume of interest and accomplishments.
10. We have no railroads, no bus lines for county travel, and few women take the trouble to learn to drive a car. Consequently, meetings must usually be confined to small groups, thus making it necessary to hold many more meetings to reach the same number of people.

C.-Leaders.

1. Rapid turn-over of leaders. They do not take part in building program from year to year.
2. Lack of time and energy to follow up on local-leader work.
3. Getting the right people to assume leadership - not the woman with most time or the one who can drive a car.
4. All leaders are not capable of carrying on successful meetings. Should leaders teach fewer meetings and be more thoroughly trained?
5. Different interpretation needed as to what constitutes a leader who helps with the program in ways other than teaching leaders. More time needs to be given by agent to those leaders.

D.-Reaching beyond the organized groups.

1. How to reach the increasing number of rural and small-town women who are going to work in mills.

D.-Reaching beyond the organized groups. (cont'd).

2. Though nonmembers of groups are reached to a certain extent by calls and letters, time of agent is so taken up with meetings, not enough time for help to individual women who do not attend.

3. Greatest problem is how to reach the large percentage of foreign-born women, and those who have very low incomes.

E.-Use of specialists.

1. Specialists could help by making digests of latest information in their fields. If specialists could spend more time with community groups, even helping to organize them, they would have better understanding of home-makers' needs.

2. Each specialist should prepare detailed plan of projects a year in advance so that agents could explain it intelligently to women.

3. Having people in county know more about a project before they begin. More specialist help needed for this purpose.

4. Specialists need to give more time to helping agent in various fields of home economics. (4-H specialists needed in subject-matter fields in home economics where agent carries both adult and junior work.)

5. Great need for a child-development program in our State. Since child care and management is a real problem in many homes, there is need for more concentrated extension work in this field.

F.-Organization of agent's time.

1. Home demonstration agents are under too much strain and do not live sanely.

2. We have built up more of a demand than we can satisfy with present help.

3. Demands of large membership for a more extensive program than there is time to follow up.

4. Problem often to find time enough to thoroughly plan field work -- need help in administration.

5. How to plan enough time for organization and administration. How to use office time to best advantage despite office calls and telephone.

6. How to administer a heavy program and do project teaching besides.

7. Hard to do creative thinking when the job continually "pushes." Need time for evaluating what we are doing, or else we are apt to lose our way and fail to see the woods for the trees.

F.-Organization of agent's time. (cont'd).

8. Multiplicity of things on which I should keep informed.
9. Need time to complete a piece of work begun with satisfactory detail of finish.
10. So much time and energy involved in carrying out projects of specialists - little or no time left to give to problems of local groups.
11. To continue a successful membership campaign and at the same time continue the extension program.
12. Work tends to be heavier in fall.
13. Constant checking on results seems to take much time. Could not time be spent to better advantage teaching rather than checking?
14. How to keep up to date in all lines of home economics.
15. More than one-third of the home demonstration clubs insist on meetings at night. Though agent does not meet them every month, these meetings together with Grange and other programs take a great many evenings.
16. Our work has grown to the point in this county where it could be better handled by two people.

G.-General.

1. Many women are unable to follow extension recommendations because of lack of funds.
2. To get to meetings in winter over bad roads.
3. A newer agent's idea: "Apprenticeship should be served for several months in at least two counties."
4. To get meeting places and assemble equipment to make meetings more successful.
5. So many organizations in county, it is difficult to schedule meetings that do not conflict, resulting in poor attendance at home demonstration meetings.

* * * * *

Answers to question: "In what ways can your State leaders help you more in improving your work?"

A.-Program planning.

1. State leaders can help by interpreting to boards of directors and local committees the need for thorough work rather than a program full of isolated "things going on."
2. State leaders' help is needed to organize program, so that individual attention could be given to those homemakers needing it most. (Suggest that program be rearranged so that calls be made and individual help given in July, August, and September, since these months are less satisfactory for meetings.)
3. Need help of State leader in keeping long-time point of view on basic objectives which sometimes gets lost in present demands on agent's time.
4. Need training schools for agents and representatives of local executive committees to consider possibility of program development through local leaders.
5. By continuing the schools where we can have a chance to take a long view of our jobs and can receive expert help in methods of handling problems.
6. Need stimulus of ideas from other States. (Suggests having workers from other States participate in State extension conferences.)
7. Have several counties work on same project at same time.
8. State leader should discuss and decide with individual specialists the amount of time to be devoted to each county.
9. State leaders need to help us revolutionize program and methods to meet changing needs.
10. Need State leader's help in evaluating subjects taught and amount of time given to each subject with reference to long-time objectives.

B.-Methods in extension teaching.

1. State leaders can help by bringing to us all methods of extension teaching, and helping us to adapt those which seem best suited to our county.
2. State leaders could help in preparing newspaper material which would help to sell program as whole.
3. We are fortunate in having State leaders with broad vision, and their encouragement has helped tremendously.
4. Need definite instruction in organization and administration, efficient planning for office work. How best to conduct a meeting. Have had to learn through years of experience what might have been handed on when begin-

B.-Methods in extension teaching. (cont'd).

ning the job. Suggests good discussion among agents, specialists, and leaders of long experience on these matters, so that newer agents may have advantage of their experience.

5. State leaders and specialists could help in anticipating seasonal questions, and preparing answers in such a way that they may be passed on to members of home demonstration groups.

C.-Leadership.

1. By interpreting to local women the plan of local leadership, its possibilities and values in a community when it actually functions.

2. Give county officers and women a better idea of need for volunteer leaders and their responsibilities. Help women better to understand the agent's work in a county and to let them know of work and problems in other counties, other States.

3. To help leaders to understand responsibilities to group and to help groups appreciate work of leaders.

4. More recognition by State supervisors of work done by local women in forwarding extension program would be greatly appreciated by women and would advance the work in a county.

D.-Time and office management.

1. Assist us in mechanics of files and permanent records.

2. Need 1 or 2 days' help from supervisor in establishing files in county office, so that information may best be recorded and summarized for future use.

E.-Reports.

1. Assist us in using best methods to get reports.

2. Evaluate with us our annual report.

3. System of reports that would help us to know a year in advance what information is needed for annual reports.

4. State leaders could outline questions to be answered in annual reports each year, so agent and women would know what information will be needed and assemble much of it during the year.

F.-General.

1. Better cooperation among State leader, specialists, and agents.
2. Lack of realization on part of agents and specialists of value of three lines of work - agriculture, home economics, 4-H club - working together and hitting at same problem from three angles at same time. Departmental lines too rigid, tend to isolate subject matter instead of seeing it in its relationship to lives of families. State leader can help by interpreting needs and softening departmental lines.
3. State leaders not always familiar enough with conditions encountered by county worker.
4. Revise membership system so it does not unduly encourage the reenrollment of same people year after year.
5. State leaders' help is needed in passing on to the agents new ideas and "fads" that come up in home economics and best information on same.
6. Help with organization plans for membership and administration.
7. By supplying at least a part-time assistant in 4-H Club work.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY



1022849219